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APPROACHES TO SIGHT SINGING MUSICIANSHIP
FOR CHILDREN'S CHOIRS OF PROFESSIONAL STANDARD:
A CANADIAN PERSPECTIVE

by

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To my deceased father Harold John Ries.

His generosity, integrity and work ethic was, and still is, an inspiration to me.

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I. INTRODUCTION

Sir Francis Bacon, in *Famous Quotations* (1989), is attributed with the saying, ‘reading maketh a full man’ (p. 26). Ignoring the fact that this statement is not politically correct, and ignoring the fact that Bacon was not referring to music at all, music educators could adapt this and say: ‘Reading maketh a full musician.’

Approaches to Sight Singing Musicianship for Children’s Choirs of Professional Standard: A Canadian Perspective evolved out of a personal fascination with the acquisition and development of choral sight-reading skills. Upon examination of my own history as a choral singer, I cannot recall the moment when I suddenly discovered how to sight sing. The process was gradual, and through years of piano study and participation in numerous choirs, I realized that I had become a fine reader. It also became clear to me that I had developed an acute pitch memory, often defined as ‘perfect pitch’ or ‘absolute pitch.’ I was not aware of this as a child, although ‘middle’ C was etched firmly in my mind from practising too many scales. Through an intense concentration on choral singing and sight singing, I was soon able to reproduce all tones that I saw on the score without first finding the reference pitch of ‘middle’ C nor retreating to the aid of an instrument. Sight singing was a natural phenomenon for me. When faced with the responsibility of teaching this skill, I knew that I had much to do to understand the sight singing process. A rather scathing comment in the *Oxford Companion to Music* (1975) had a great impact on me.

. . .[by] possessing a sense of absolute pitch they [musicians with absolute pitch] seem to pick up the ability to read by some knack of direct association between the sign and the sound. Such persons are generally useless as teachers as they are incapable of putting themselves in the place

of the ordinary pupil. Where they come into positions of official influence they are educationally dangerous on account of their impression that sight singing is a simple matter of understanding notation (a mere intellectual process), whereas to 99% of pupils it is primarily a matter of training the musical ear. (p. 952)

As a responsible teacher, I knew it was crucial to collect a repertory of ideas and approaches that would assist my students. This repertory continues to grow, and it will continue to do so throughout my career as a teacher and choral conductor.

The study that follows examines what sight singing musicianship is and summarizes generally accepted teaching approaches. Interviews with three leading Canadian children's choir conductors of professional calibre—John Barron, Bruce Pullan and Elaine Quilichini—give a pragmatic view of attitudes towards sight singing musicianship. Through the examination of what is available for sight singing methodology, plus an analysis of what actually occurs in existing professional choirs, it will be possible to transfer ideas for choral sight singing education, plus identify sight singing objectives and applications for individual choral programmes, amateur and otherwise.

Appendix A contains a comprehensive bibliography of suggested sight-reading and ear training resources suitable for choral programmes.

Appendix B consists of waiver of anonymity forms signed by the interview participants.

Appendix C includes interview transcriptions of the three Canadian conductors.

Definition of Terms

According to the definition in *Webster's Encyclopedic Dictionary of the English Language* (1988), the word 'approach' can be used either as a verb, 'to seek a way of dealing with' or as a noun, 'a method of beginning' (p. 45).

'Sight singing' is simply singing music at sight, although a more detailed definition from the *New Harvard Dictionary of Music* (1986) is given in this paper on page five.

'Musicianship', according to the *Little Oxford Dictionary* (1989), refers to 'the skill in the science or practice of music' (p. 365). Rao (1987) elaborates:

Understanding something artistically involves *musicianship*. *Musicianship is a quality of musical understanding*. Musicianship is not only reading rhythm and pitch, or following the score from point to point. It is the student's grasp of musical meanings, the structure and form of the music, and the musical feeling the composition conveys. Musicianship as a form of musical understanding develops from the student's ability to *make* music. (1: p. 8)

The term 'children's choirs' is self explanatory, however, reference may be made to youth choirs with an upper age limit of 26.

The word 'professional' demands some examination, because there are ambiguities when applied to the world of choral music. Defined in the *Little Oxford Dictionary* (1989), 'professional' means 'engaged in specified activity as paid occupation' (p. 429). Do children's choirs exist which are *fully* professional? Is a children's choir considered to be professional when the choral programme receives remuneration for performances, but not for individual choristers? Is a children's choir considered to be professional when the choir occasionally performs *gratis* as well as occasionally demanding a fee? For the purposes of this paper, the term 'professional' has

been used in connection with the word 'standard.' The tenet of Ashworth Bartle (1988) will be adopted in the pages that follow.

A . . . professional children's choir . . . is one that is not affiliated with a school system or a church. The professional children's choir is one that does not, as a general rule, perform without being paid a fee, unless, for one reason or another, the choir chooses to donate its services. These children's choirs, consisting of carefully selected choristers, enables their directors to achieve the highest artistic standards imaginable, with the finest, challenging treble-choir repertoire available. (p. 109)

II. SIGHT SINGING: A Definition and an Historical Overview

A Definition

According to *The New Harvard Dictionary of Music*, sight-reading or sight singing is:

the performing of a piece of music on seeing it for the first time. The ability to sing at sight requires the ability to imagine the sound of pitches or intervals without the aid of an instrument, and training in this skill forms an important part of instruction in basic musicianship for carrying out this training. (p. 748)

Sight singing is therefore related to ear training. Sight singing is an excellent manifestation of internal hearing, which is an important facet of music literacy training.

In the Preface to Szönyi's *Musical Reading and Writing* (1974), Kodály proclaims:

‘He who cannot hear what he sees and cannot see what he hears is not a musician.’ (p. 9)

When a musician sight sings, musical understanding, or *musicianship*, is demonstrated.

An Historical Overview

Music has formed a part of educational system instruction as early as these systems have been recorded. The human voice has been the starting point for music instruction in most cultures. In the days of the Ancient Greeks, the earliest account of music instruction was found in Homer's *Odyssey* (c.1050—850 BC), where the gods ‘bestow song’ on those around them. In the 7th and 6th centuries BC, the choral lyric appeared along with monody. Many choruses were trained for religious festivals.

Education for the Ancient Greeks was divided into two categories—‘music’ and ‘gymnastic’—the former encompassing every form of literary and artistic culture to exercise the mind, the latter to exercise the body. Both Plato (c. 427-348 BC) and

Aristotle (384-322 BC) gave music an important role in education and acknowledged the great influence music possessed on human character.

In Roman times, music was looked upon with some degree of suspicion, but there is evidence that the teaching of singing, dancing and instrumental performance was part of the secondary schools. There were public choral performances of Horace's poetry (c. 65-8 BC), which required the training of singers. The prevailing Roman attitude supported knowledge of melody and rhythm, as this would contribute to rhetorical skill.

In early Christian times, education was the responsibility of the church. In its schools, music was part of the Quadrivium, i.e. the upper group of the seven liberal arts: arithmetic, music, geometry, and astronomy. Instruction in singing was of course important to provide singing of chants and psalms in the church services. Centered on the knowledge of plainsong, the music curriculum had an additional component, which concentrated on the acoustical theories of Boethius (AD 470-524). Song schools, or *Schola Cantorum* were founded in Rome in the fourth century. Initially these schools incorporated training in chant singing that followed an oral tradition, but soon different types of primitive notation developed.

The system of sight-reading that has survived into modern Western use was first recorded in the early 9th century. It is traditionally associated with Guido of Arezzo (c. 995-1050). In Palisca's *Three Medieval Treatises* (1978) Guido is quoted:

Since both my natural disposition and my emulation of good men made me eager to work for the general benefit, I undertook, among other things, to teach music to boys. Presently Divine Grace favored me, and some of them, trained by imitating the [steps of the mono]chord, with the practice of our notation, were within the space of a month singing so securely at first sight chants that had not seen or heard, that it was the greatest wonder to many people. But if someone cannot do that, I do not know with what face he can venture to call himself a singer. (p. 58)

Guido's main musical contributions began with a type of notation using equidistant lines. He then introduced a method for learning to read music written in this new notation. Guido's system utilized the text and tune of a composed hymn tune, *Ut queant laxis*, in which each of the first six lines of the hymn began one step higher than the previous line; the six initial tones of these lines constituted a hexachord. The syllables sung to the notes of the hexachord in the hymn tune, and associated with them in Guidonian solmization, were *ut*, *re*, *mi*, *fa*, *sol*, and *la*. Between *mi* and *fa* was a semitone; a whole tone separated other adjacent syllables. In Guido's notation, *ut* was indicated by the use of a yellow line, *fa* was indicated by a red line to show the place of the semitones in the melody. When a melody to be solmized moved beyond the limits of a single hexachord (regular or ficta), the device of mutation was used to change from one hexachord to another. Mutation took place on a note belonging to both the hexachord currently in use and the one to which it was necessary to change. To make the mutation, one simply changed the solmization syllable of the note in question from that which it carried in the first hexachord to that belonging to it in the second hexachord.

Using this type of modulation or mutation with pivot tones, singers could use this hexachord system from G—e", a range which encompassed the bass/soprano range. Before the end of the Middle Ages, theorists had recognized the usefulness of irregular (or ficta) hexachords in justifying the existence of chromatically altered notes. Early in the 15th century, hexachords beginning on every note, altered or unaltered, were described by theorists. This system is the ancestor of the movable-*do*/tonic sol-fa systems of today.

In the Renaissance, the teaching of singing and music literacy followed much the same pattern as the ideal of the medieval period in the monasteries. The *Schola Cantorum* of Europe, founded in the 4th century, had played an important part in music education for nearly a thousand years. The training of musicians in religious circles, both Catholic and Protestant, was primarily to lead song in the churches. One of the most important developments during this time was the notation of absolute pitch and letter names to denote pitch in keyboard works.

With more extensive chromaticism and transposition, the Guidonian solmization began to lose its usefulness and other alternative solmization methods developed. (i.e. Ramos de Pareia using syllables *psal-li-tur per vo-ces is-tas* [1482], Waelrant's Bicedization using syllables *bo, ce, di, ga, lo, ma, ni* [ca. 1517-98], Hitzler's Bebization using syllables *ce, de, mi, fe, ge, la, bi* [1576-1635], and Graun's Damenization using syllables *da, me, ni, po, tu, la, be* [1704-59]). With the breakdown of Guido's system, and with the introduction of alphabetical pitch names, some countries adapted d'Arezzo's note names to be fixed to the actual pitches—this process marking the ancestry of the fixed-*do* /solfège system of today.

Around 1600, the syllable *si* was added to the original six tones of the Guidonian hexachord, so that the series could encompass an octave. Otto Gibelius revised Bebization and as part of this, adopted Guido's syllables for the diatonic notes, and following the Italian writers of the 16th century, used *do* in place of *ut*.

An English system of solmization called Fasola was in use from the end of the 16th century. This system used only four syllables: *fa-sol-la-mi*. It is an abridged reconception of the hexachordal system. Every major scale is composed of the trichord

fa-sol-la and the tetrachord *fa-sol-la-mi*. In minor, the basic scale becomes *la-mi-fa-sol-la-fa-sol-la*. (*fa sol la fa sol la mi fa* corresponds to *c d e f g a b c*). John Playford (1674) states that this new reconception was:

sufficient for expressing the several sounds, and less burthensome for the memory of Practitioners. (pp. 1-2)

As explained by Anderson (1980), music education during the 17th and 19th centuries

formed an important part of general education, despite increasing pressures in favour of pursuits of more direct relevance to the immediate problems of everyday life. Musical skills were also a basic ingredient of the well-rounded aesthetic education to which growing numbers of amateurs among both the ruling aristocracy and the emerging middle classes openly aspired. The professional education of musicians, formerly achieved more by osmosis than by systematic study, increasingly reflected the general concern with proper methodology and didactic tools, which produced drastic changes in all fields of learning. (6: p. 12)

The 17th century Lutherans made the first systematic efforts towards universal musical literacy. They believed that a proper education was dependent on a basic knowledge and understanding of music. The Catholics at this time, and especially the Jesuits, held music in contempt. In some areas, only unison singing was allowed in church. Despite this, Catholic education did embrace some degree of musical literacy.

Jean-Jacques Rousseau, in 18th century France, introduced the novel idea that music deserved early attention simply because of its proven psychological and social benefits. According to Anderson (1980),

Rousseau, an accomplished musician, urged that practical, primarily aural experiences should precede the reading and writing of music, an idea that was geared to the absorptive potential of various age groups. Following Rousseau's example, Johann Gernhard Basedow, the creator of the so-called Philanthropic movement, suggested that singing should be used as a stimulus to all learning. (6: p.15)

In the *Oxford Companion to Music* (1975), Rousseau was said to have demanded:

that the songs used shall be simple and undramatic, their object being to secure flexibility, sonority, and equality of voice, and nothing more; he would even prefer wordless songs, but if not these, then songs specially written and very simple in their ideas. The reading of music should come later, when the love of music has been awakened; in his exposition of this principle there is some anticipation of the Curwen doctrine of the thing first and then the sign . . . he argues forcibly and rationally in favour of what we call the movable doh rather than the fixed doh, and of the lah minor, also. (p. 316)

According to Anderson (1980), Italy continued to be the centre for vocal music from the *Schola Cantorum* and the early chants of the Catholic church, to the masses of Josquin des Prez, to the rise of Italian opera during the Romantic period.

Italian music education was dominated by the often excellent vocal training provided by the numerous conservatories and boarding-schools run by the clergy for poor children. A typical day's lessons consisted of five hours in the morning devoted successively to difficult passages, trills, scales and additional ornaments, literature and supervised vocal exercises, often in front of a mirror; and three hours in the afternoon devoted respectively to general theory, contrapuntal practice and the study of the vocal manners of the most famous contemporary singers. (6 : p. 15)

The use of solmization is referred to in the writings of many renowned Italian singing teachers such as Concone (1800) and Nava (1903).

Anderson (1980) describes music education in 19th century England, where Sarah Anne Glover's

ingenious method of introducing children to pitch discrimination had been designed to simplify instruction for both teacher and pupil. The book was later to provide the basis of the Tonic Sol-fa system and to exert considerable influence on school music for more than a century. (6: p. 22)

Assisted by Sarah Anne Glover, the Englishman, John Curwen (1816-1880)

developed the system of *Tonic Sol-fa*/movable-*do* around 1841. Curwen is described in the *Oxford Companion* (1975). A Congregational minister,

considered to be without musical ear, sought a method by which not only he but the young people in whom he was, as a minister, interested, might learn to sing at sight. (p. 1029)

To assist singers in singing accurately, the *Tonic Sol-fa* system used solmization syllables for each pitch, and hand signs correspond to the syllables. *Do* is movable to any pitch and in the minor key, the tonic is *la*. At one time rhythm had been indicated by bar lines, colons, commas, periods and dashes which provided an alternative to staff notation when accompanied by solmization syllables.

This system was accepted by many and violently opposed by others. The leader of the opposition, Dr. John Hullah, had imported the Wilhem system from France, which was based on fixed *do*. This system eventually lost popularity and the *Tonic Sol-fa* system gained pre-eminence.

In North America, according to Anderson (1980), music education had its inception in the Protestant church. Singing schools were established

with an emphasis on reading music so that congregational singing might be improved and the repertory expanded. (6: p. 27)

Lowell Mason (1792-1872), educator, composer, anthologist and conductor, was a pioneer in the introduction of music education in American schools as well as an advocate for teacher training for music teachers. Beginning in 1830, Mason developed a keen interest in teaching vocal music to children. He began to teach music in private schools in 1832, and in 1833 Mason established the Boston Academy of Music with the goal of encouraging music education among the masses as well as raising the standards of

church music. Often referred to as the “father of singing”, Mason wrote one of the first music methods. He traveled to Switzerland to observe the renowned Swiss educator Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi (1746-1827), and in 1834 the *Manual of the Boston Academy of Music for Instruction in the Elements of Vocal Music on the System of Pestalozzi* was published. Phillips (1992) states that the purpose of this manual was to ‘cultivate music literacy and proper vocal production among children’. (p. 6)

Music literacy was obviously emphasized in the United States at the end of the 19th century according to Anderson (1980), with methods that:

represented a variety of approaches to the teaching of pitch reading, the shape-note method, Tonic Sol-fa and the fixed-doh system. (6: p. 29)

Due to the information age and globalization in the 20th century, music literacy approaches worldwide have undergone many changes. Pedagogical ideas are shared between many countries. Zoltán Kodály began as early as 1911 to question practices of music literacy pedagogy, while consolidating and combining earlier systems of music education found throughout Europe. Our own country has experienced a similar evolution. Anderson (1980) defines the state of music education in Canada with the following summary:

Canadian music education combines British, French, German and American features. Singing is at the core of music teaching, and its methodology continues to be a matter of much interest. The Tonic Sol-fa system of John Curwen was widely used in the early days in English-speaking Canada, and solfège in the French-speaking parts of the country, but since 1960 Kodály’s system has been introduced, often in modified form, into both English and French-speaking Canada. Since the mid-1950’s indigenous Canadian folk material has also been used in schools. Orff’s Schulwerk, with its emphasis on improvisation in the early stages of musical development, has received significant if not widespread use. (6: p. 35)

As the end of the millenium approaches, this definition is still applicable.

Dalcroze, Kodály and Orff philosophies continue to be foundations on which Canadian music education is built. In terms of choral music education, Canada has been strongly influenced by British, German and Scandinavian traditions. Leading Canadian choral conductors have traced the roots of our European choral heritage, bringing a unique approach to choral tone, vocal production and music literacy skills.

III. SIGHT SINGING: Integrated Factors & Approaches

It goes without saying that any choral director is anxious to have choristers who can read music and possess a fine ear for many reasons: 1) to expedite the rehearsal process and learning, 2) to establish a sense of fine intonation and ensemble, and 3) to reach a point where the beauty and art of music making can take the first priority. Despite the fact that the conductor's goal is to produce works of choral art—a 'community' experience—the nurturing of individual musicians should not be overlooked. Michael R. Rogers in the foreword to Earl Henry's *Sight Singing* (1997) writes:

The purpose of sight singing is not to provide a sight-reading service for music department choral groups or to develop articulate vocal response, although these may be worthwhile fringe benefits. The goal, again, is to produce a listener who can hear musical patterns. (p. xiii)

By teaching the skill of sight singing and ear training, many fundamental and essential musicianship elements are established. A refined tonal sense, rhythmic acuity, aural memory, harmonic sensitivity, and internal musical perception are enhanced and can be reinforced in a choral setting with careful planning and integration. Rogers (1997) continues:

Skill in being able to imagine and hear music inside one's head from a printed score, which is the real goal of sight singing, is considered by

Sight Singing, Ear Training & Vocal Technique

The parameters of this study embrace only the approaches to sight singing for children's choirs; however, it is necessary to touch briefly on the relationship between sight singing and ear training, plus examine the role of vocal technique in this equation.

1. Sight Singing and Ear Training and Musicianship

More (1980) examines the relationship between these two areas.

Among those university educators who can accept a Kodály-based system of solfège training for its value in instruction of sight singing are many who feel that ear training should be taught separately. This separation is unfortunate and unnecessary. Musicians singing a melody in relative solmization can also recognize its tonal implications and simultaneously analyze it. Already much ear training has occurred. It is virtually impossible to separate the two completely. Any attempt to do so duplicates time which can ill afford to be lost in any music program curriculum, not to mention the fact that it diminishes even further the role of the human voice, which for so many centuries reigned supreme in the world of music. (p. 17)

Sight singing and ear training, together demonstrate *musicianship*.

2. Vocal Technique and Musicianship

The ability to sing in tune is an obvious prerequisite for a chorister; however, matters pertaining to intonation are a continual challenge for the choral conductor. In my own choral experience, I have been under the direction of choral directors who insist that the choir is flat or sharp, but neglect to give solutions related to vocal production. Instead of identifying and labeling intonation problems, it is perhaps advisable to approach these problems from the perspective of vocal production or technique. Gruner (1978) supports the theory that most intonation problems occur as a result of incorrect vocal production with very few problems actually related to the ear. For singers, it is difficult to hear objectively, necessitating sensory images to overcome vocal problems which ultimately affect intonation.

Jean Ashworth Bartle (1988), conductor of the Toronto Children's Chorus, writes:

'If the fundamentals of good singing are employed, if the children have a good ear and if the conductor conducts effectively, good intonation should look after itself. Why, then, do many children's choirs sing out of tune?' (p. 27) She continues with reasons for intonation problems:

Reasons for flat singing

1. Inadequate breath support and poor posture.
2. Lack of uniformity and brightness in the vowels.
3. Lethargy, and lack of concentration.
4. The piece is in a poor key.
5. Intervals are too close in ascending passages and too far apart in descending passages.
6. Leading tones and thirds are neither bright enough nor high enough.
7. Rehearsal has gone on for too long or too much time has been spent on one piece.
8. Boredom, fatigue, uninspiring director, singing too much slow music during the rehearsal.
9. Children fail to keep the ribs expanded at the ends of phrases.
10. The conductor fails to hear and correct faulty intonation immediately.
11. Children have come to depend on the piano and haven't done enough a cappella singing or haven't been listening carefully to one another.

Reasons for sharp singing

1. Faulty production.
2. Tension in the jaw, lips and tongue.
3. Vowels are incorrectly produced or are pinched.
4. The conductor transmits too much tension and nervousness in his or her stance, gestures and face.
5. Children have been singing far too long and are overcompensating.
6. Conductor sings sharp and the children imitate.
7. The conductor fails to hear the problem and correct it immediately.
8. Children sing too loud and force the sound.
9. Children are intensely keyed up because of a major performance.

(p. 27)

Aside from conductor-related problems affecting intonation, (#'s 8, 10—flat singing and #'s 4, 6, 7—sharp singing) the other reasons embrace a combination of vocal production and listening issues. Vocal production is a psychoacoustical and physiological process. It

is a complex coordination of muscles, cartilage, tissue, breath, perception, and memory. It is a psychomotor activity in that it relies on motor skills combined with mental activity. In order to develop singers fully in the realm of sight-reading, attention must be given to proper vocal production, the application of which will ultimately improve their intonation. Ear training will naturally be incorporated, and will obviously assist in developing an acute pitch sense or aural image. According to Benward (1965):

the true value of the discipline (sight singing) is in the increased aural imagery it fosters. (p. vii)

In the *Selected Writings* (1974), Zoltan Kodály observes:

Music teaching . . . starts with singing . . . It is based on the teaching of solfa, which has several centuries of tradition behind it and is improving all the time. Only by practising this for a long time does the musician develop his ability to transform the notes seen into sounds and the sounds heard into written notes. In no one is this ability innate; it can be acquired by hard work only, taking a shorter or longer time depending on the person. As a matter of fact, this is the only thing that can be taught. For talent, be it that of the creative or the performing artist, is an innate gift. Its development depends on the development of the power to imagine sounds. Without it even the ship that has the finest start is exposed to perilous journeys and even shipwreck. (p.193)

Sight Singing Approaches

As noted in Section II, approaches for sight-reading have gone through an evolutionary process. Reduced to its most basic form, the skill is developed through the analysis and recognition of pattern. Rogers (1997) explains that

the term “sight singing” is itself a misnomer. Practiced and imagined in the proper way, the activity is not actually something learned over again each time a new melody is performed. Approached correctly, the task of singing a previously unseen example “at sight” translates into the task of understanding more-or-less common features in the tune at hand as compared with dozens or hundreds of previously viewed examples. The very characteristics that identify a melody as tonal, for example, will ensure that practiced examples share joint properties of structure and

organization with the newly tested material. Viewed in this way, sight singing becomes more like pattern recognition. (p. xiii)

He continues by summarizing five sight singing approaches that are most commonly used today.

A shorter (or longer) list could just as easily be constructed, but most approaches or methodologies would end up being variations or combinations of the following [sight singing approaches] (p. xvii)

The Intervallic Approach

Just as the name implies, intervallic sight-reading is approached by recognition and performance of individual intervals. According to Rogers (1997), this is perhaps the most commonly used approach due to the fact that many aural skills programs are based largely on individual interval identification.

Awareness of distances between pitches is obviously helpful, although if examined from a larger musical perspective, it can be a mechanical approach to music reading. Intervals are taught individually through a type of ‘song approach’ where the opening of a commonly heard song is connected to a specific interval. This does not embrace a tonal sense within a diatonic framework as an interval located at one point does not have the same function if found at another point in the scale. Also, if one is trained in this ‘song approach’ it makes for spasmodic reading of a line because individual songs must be heard within the song to be read.

The intervallic approach seems to be best applied to reading music with extreme chromaticism or without a strong tonal center. Samuel Adler’s *Sight Reading: Pitch, Interval, Rhythm* (1997) and Lars Edlund’s *Modus Novus* (1963) use this method effectively.

The Harmonic Approach

The harmonic approach to sight-reading trains the eye and ear to distinguish harmonic patterns such as chord outlines, arpeggiations, and implied progressions. Advantages to this approach are closely connected to repertoire of the Common Practice Period (ca. 1770-1830), however these sorts of outlines and patterns could feasibly be applied to the repertoire of the 20th century, although tonal centers would be shifting continually.

Structural Reduction Approach

Rogers (1997) describes this approach:

By representing or performing a complex melody (pitch and/or rhythm) in a simplified form, students can be led more easily to an accurate hearing and understanding of its organization and can be led more easily to comparisons and between melodies that on the surface may seem different but in reality share underlying points of similarity. Embedded lines and buried scale patterns, for example, often become instantly recognizable in a simplified version. For the same reason, practicing themes with their corresponding variations side by side can be vividly instructive. And highly chromatic examples can be compared with their less intense diatonic counterparts.

Once structural pitches are defined and clearly established in the mind's ear, the more decorative layers of the foreground can be added back in one at a time. What at first seemed overwhelmingly intricate can turn out to be commonplace, as the placement of individual events is seen, heard, and understood in relation to the whole—a whole, by the way, that likely will have been experienced many times before. (p. xviii)

Earl Henry (1997) leans heavily on this approach to sight singing. This technique requires careful analysis of melodies—an important element in the discipline of sight singing. In support of this, Rogers (1997) has developed analytical steps to be used when preparing to read a melody. His '6-step' approach takes the following form:

1. Analyze (key/scale/meter/tempi/phrases/cadences/recurring motifs/key-defining pitches vs. decorative pitches/high & low points/tonality frame/harmonic implications/chord outlines/contour/sequences/repetitions/contrasting vs. parallel organization/formal layout/archetypal patterns/long-range step progressions)
2. Orient (to the key via a warm-up)
3. Silent sing (noting trouble spots)
4. Sing aloud
5. Evaluate
6. Sing again (pp. xvi-xvii)

Solmization Systems Approach

Zoltán Kodály is frequently associated with solmization. In *Let Us Sing Correctly*,

(1952) he states:

. . .solmization, I think, should even precede acquaintance with musical notation. . .Successions of syllables are easier and more reliably memorized than letters; in addition, the syllable indicates the tonal function and, by memorizing the interval, we develop our sense of the tonal function. (p. 2-3)

In the *Selected Writings* (1974) Kodály continues:

. . .sol-fa needs to be continued right up to the highest grade of tuition in both singing and instrumental work, in order that we should read music in the same way than an educated adult will read a book: in silence, but imagining the sound. (p. 204)

Guido d'Arezzo demonstrated the benefits of using the solmization system in teaching sight singing and his findings have certainly stood the test of time. Each syllable represents a certain function and by using this type of system a 'faux-absolute pitch' is created. Three commonly used figurations of solmization will be described with brief references to respective advantages and disadvantages—topics of hot controversy among many music educators.

1. Fixed *do* (Solfège)

As defined earlier, ‘fixed-*do*’ (often referred to as ‘solfège’) is a system where the syllables are equivalent in meaning to letter names: *do*=C, *re*=D, *mi*=E, etc. The fixed *do* system began to be used especially with French musicians from 1600 on, and *ut* (*do*) was equated with C. The syllables are assigned to the pitches without regard to accidentals: *do*=C but also *C#* and *Cb*. Because there is no regard to accidentals, the use of fixed *do* can be confusing. Interval relationships cannot be firmly established with the syllables simply because each syllable can mean several different pitches. (e.g. *do-mi* can be heard nine different ways: *c-e*, *c-e#*, *c-eb*, *c#-e*, *c#-e#*, *c#-eb*, *cb-e*, *cb-e#*, and *cb-eb*.) The key of C would obviously be extremely easy to read, but with the addition of more sharps and flats, the melodies would become progressively more difficult to read.

Rogers (1997) states that fixed *do* is ‘generally of greater value for learning to read music than for hearing relationships within a key,’ (p. xviii) and can be more suited to atonal music.

2. Movable *do/la*-based minor (Tonic Sol-fa)

With the syllables indicating the scale degrees, the movable *do/la* system equates the syllables with function. *Do*= the tonic, *sol*=the dominant in major/*la*=the tonic, *mi*=the dominant in minor. This system is often called the *Kodály system*. The benefit of this system is inherent in the consistency of interval relationships. *Do-sol* is always a P5 whether it is in major or minor, and chromatic tones are marked with alterations (*do*, *di*, *re*, *ri*, *mi*, *fa*, *fi*, *sol*, *si*, *la*, *li*, *ti do*; *do*, *ra*, *re*, *ma*, *mi*, *fa*, *sah*, *sol*, *lo*, *la*, *ta*, *ti*, *do*).

By using *la* as the tonic in the minor, it is easy to see the connection between a major key and its relative minor.

The use of movable *do/la*-based minor or tonic sol-fa has limited benefits in the realm of highly chromatic music or so-called ‘atonal’ music. However, many students that have been thoroughly trained in this system can easily apply it in these situations, by using pivot tones and shifting the placement of *do*.

(For a heated comparison between the fixed *do* system and the moveable *do* system, see Bruce More’s unpublished paper (1980), “A study of the fixed and movable do systems: A critique of W. Multer’s *Solmization and Musical Perception*.”)

3. Movable *do/do*-based minor

As has been previously stated, the *do/do*-based minor is one where *do* is considered the tonic in both major and minor. Rogers’ (1997) view is as follows:

This last system is currently in greatest use nationally at the college level and is believed by many leading authorities to best project the internal relationships found in tonal. (p. xviii)

One can quickly see that by using this system, functional relationships will be firmly established. *Do-sol* will refer to a tonic-dominant relationship whether in major or minor. Relative major/minor relationships will not be as easily recognized using this system, as a different set of syllables must be adopted in the modulation.

More (1980), a proponent for movable *do/la*-based minor defends his position with a critique of the *do*-based minor.

It is important to note that historically, no significant system has used ‘do’ for the tonic note in a minor scale. (p. 10)

Paul Hindemith in *Elementary Training* (1969) provides a criticism for the use of any type of solmization:

A musician brought up on the method of Solfège, as practised in countries under the influence of French or Italian musical culture, will probably deny that there could be any better method. And if one knows the

comparatively high standard in sight-reading of melodic and rhythmic patterns (even higher in the rapid pronunciation of the solmization syllables!) reached by students of this method, one is tempted to agree. But the disadvantages of this method show up later in the musician's course of study: it is extremely difficult to introduce students so trained to a higher conception of harmony and melody, and to bring them to a certain independence in their own creative work. They either cannot take the step out of their narrow concept of tonality (which by the uniform nomenclature for a tone and all its derivations is distorted almost to the point where reason turns into nonsense!), or they plunge more easily than others into what is assumed to be a new freedom: tonal disorder and incoherence. (p. viii)

The Scale-Degree Function Approach

Rogers (1997) defines this approach as one that:

stresses learning the tendency-tone and resolution patterns that operate in defining the pitch centricity found in the major/minor tonal system of the common-practice period. The foundation of this method rests on the internal tugs, pulls, and proclivities that pitches exhibit for one another in tonal settings. (pp. xviii-xix)

This scale-degree function approach could be used synonymously with the *do/do*-based minor system. Instead of Guido's syllables, numbers are employed. It is my preference as a singer to use the Guidonian syllables as they possess pure vowels, to the benefit of intonation.

Other Approaches and Considerations

Aside from Rogers' (1997) excellent summary of current common sight singing methods, some other questions must be considered. Are absolute pitches ever used, and if so, can these be an effective means to teach sight singing? What types of scales should be taught first in sight singing training? What types of repertoire should be used? Should examples be specially composed for pattern recognition, or should one use music literature only?

1. The Use of Absolute Pitches

Absolute pitch names can be used as pitch denominators. German letter names are often used for this approach. For pitch alterations, the Germans use a bright vowel for sharps and a darker vowel for flats, e.g. $D=D$, $D\flat=Des$, $D\sharp=Dis$, $D\flat\flat=Deses$ $Dx=Disis$. In Hungarian Kodály schools, absolute pitches are taught simultaneously with the movable *do/la*-based approach. Music reading is then easily applied to instrumental training. When C clefs are a part of a sight singing curriculum, absolute pitches used as pitch denominators are ideal to establish a concrete connection with the new clef. In addition, when dealing with music of the 20th century, the use of absolute pitch denominators can work extremely well. This approach also can serve as an excellent tool to establish a refined pitch memory (so-called ‘absolute pitch’ or ‘perfect pitch’.)

As with the number approach to sight singing, absolute pitch names can be somewhat awkward to sing, which can lead to intonation problems. More (1980) offers an additional criticism:

There is, however, less individuality in the sound of each syllable, and the consonant ending of the altered letter names places an undue emphasis on chromatic tones. (p. 11)

2. Pentatonic or Diatonic—Where do we Begin?

The use of the pentatonic scale in early reading instruction is prevalent in the Kodály approach to music literacy for many reasons: 1) secure intonation is established because of the absence of the semitone, 2) the pentatonic is the basic tonal foundation for children’s folk songs, and 3) a limited range of notes and interval combinations are dealt with to provide a secure basis. Choksy (1981)

summarizes Kodály's philosophy on the use of the pentatonic with several quotations from his writings:

The pentatonic [folk songs] are particularly suited to the kindergarten. It is through them that children can achieve correct intonation soonest, for they do not have to bother with semitones. Even for children of eight-nine years of age, semitones and the diatonic scale are difficult, not to mention the chromatic semitones. This latter is difficult even at the secondary school. (p. 9)

Nobody wants to stop at pentatony. But, indeed, the beginnings must be made there on the one hand, in this way the child's biogenetical development is natural and, on the other, this is what is demanded by a rational pedagogical sequence. (p. 9)

Outside of the Kodály approach to music reading, the diatonic scale is the point of departure, beginning with diatonic melodies that move by step, followed by intervallic leaps that embrace the tonic, subdominant and dominant chords.

Both pentatonic and diatonic approaches have valid arguments and examples of successful publications using both systems are numerous. For example, fine texts such as *Sight Singing* by Earl Henry (1997), *A New Approach to Sight Singing* by Sol Berkowitz (1997), and *The Folk Song Sight Singing Series* (1933), recommended by the Toronto Royal Conservatory of Music, seem to focus on the diatonic approach, while Nancy Telfer's *Successful Sight-Singing* (1993) or Erszebet Szöny's *Musical Reading and Writing* (1974) initially establish the pentatonic.

3. Sight Singing Repertoire—Existing Repertoire or Specially Composed?

There is a wealth of sight singing/ear training publications in existence. Each one takes a slightly different perspective toward the development of listening and reading. As noted previously, some take the diatonic scale as their point of departure while others concentrate on the pentatonic.

Another difference among publications concerns the *kind* of repertoire chosen for sight singing practice. Repertoire taken from music literature is the staple for some, e.g. *Folk Song Sight Singing Series* (1933), Ottman's *Music for Sight Singing* (1996), Hegyi's *Solfège According to the Kodály Concept* (1975, 1979) while others such as Berkowitz (1997), Telfer (1993), and Adler (1997) deal primarily with specially composed melodies for specific pedagogical purposes. In the foreword to the third edition, Berkowitz (1986) states his rationale for utilizing these specially composed melodies:

A number of textbooks utilizing examples from vocal and instrumental literature have been published for use in sight singing courses. *A New Approach to Sight Singing*, however, is made up entirely of music written specifically for the study of singing at sight . . . We are convinced that our approach is pedagogically sound. We find that we are able to strike a particular level of difficulty and focus on specific problems more effectively by writing material to meet the students' needs than by using melodies drawn from the literature. (p. ix)

In the fourth edition of *A New Approach to Sight Singing*, Berkowitz (1997) adds a chapter that contains melodies from standard classical and folk repertoires.

Prompted by our own teaching experience and the much appreciated suggestions of many colleagues, we have added . . . "Melodies from the Literature", to the fourth edition. While the chapters carried over from previous editions are entirely our own material, this new chapter provides melodies from the standard repertory, together with folk material. Study of these melodies will enable students to make the transfer of learning from exercises to the music with which they will be working during their professional lives. (p. ix)

As convenient as it is to find a manual that contains graded sight reading exercises, it is the preference of many music educators to use music literature as a basis. Graded material can be excellent for preliminary reading exercises, but can be somewhat tedious if made a staple for a sight singing program. With a wealth of music literature

available to us of all styles and from various epochs, one can certainly find graded material suitable for reading needs.

4. Other Repertoire Considerations

In the Kodály Conservatory in Kecskémet, Hungary, young musicians are trained for professional musical careers through a common sense repertoire method. Students in the first year of the Conservatory program concentrate solely on music of the Classical period (ca. 1770-1830). During this year of intense study, the students become intimately acquainted with the music of this period in interesting and creative ways, assimilating the musical language. Sight reading/part singing and ear-training material is taken from *a cappella* choral pieces, masses, art songs and symphonic works.

The second year of study applies the same approach to the repertoire of the Baroque. Highly chromatic music of Bach stretches the Conservatory pupil and much attention is placed on the fugal masterpieces of the time.

The music of the Romantic is studied in the third year alongside the music of the Renaissance. Modal music is of prime consideration during this time.

The fourth and final year is devoted to music of the 20th century, obviously with special treatment of the music of Bartók and Kodály. Post tonal melodies are briefly dealt with during the previous years, but it is at this time that sight-reading manuals such as Edlund's *Modus Novus* (1963) are frequently used.

This repertoire approach is extremely logical as it begins at a point where the young musician is most familiar, i.e. traditional, functional harmonic movement: I—IV—V—I. An entire year intensely studying one style is unheard of in music schools in North

America, but it is an effective approach that ensures that the aspiring professional will have a flawless foundation.

5. Chronologically Pedagogic?

Although not found in any particular manual, repertoire used for sight-reading material can be considered in yet another historical context. By beginning with the earliest notated music, one can begin sight singing instruction through the conjunct, monophonic melodies of Gregorian Chants. Following this, part-singing can be explored through the study of organum and Medieval motets while the music of the Renaissance can establish a feeling for polyphony in anticipation of the Baroque. The styles of the ensuing eras would then be treated accordingly.

When comparing this repertoire approach with the model from the Hungarian Conservatory, it is evident that the chronological approach would be difficult at the early stages, as the use of modes prevalent in Medieval and Renaissance music would not be familiar to the beginning student of sight singing. It is an intellectual approach, perhaps more suitable for the adult student, with many challenges that would naturally incorporate an excellent historical knowledge.

6. The Choral Setting—Learn to Read by Reading?

The types of approaches explained in Section III could be applied in any choral setting. Some conductors are not interested in the application of solmization, but challenge the choristers to learn to read by reading. By simply guiding them through the score and using the correct musical terminology, the choristers are expected to decode the symbols on the page. This could be labeled the ‘osmosis’ approach. In many situations—and I am acquainted with many fine readers who learned this way—this is an effective,

efficient approach to sight singing. This approach does not provide any problem-solving devices. When reading in this way, piano accompaniment is often necessary. It is perhaps best suited to the chorister with a strong musical background and excellent ear.

Many conductors are loath to spare valuable rehearsal time on formal sight singing within the realm of the rehearsal. To compensate, excerpts from the repertoire being studied is presented to their choristers for sight singing material. Children's choirs—especially those choirs who are of professional standard—will come in contact with a variety of music of different genres. This type of repertoire concentration is efficient in that it develops reading skill while reinforcing potentially difficult passages in the music.

Rao, in the *Choral Music Experience* (1987), suggests a particular teaching sequence based on the philosophy of instruction which begins and ends with music as opposed to abstract musical concepts. A score of G.F. Handel's *Oh Let the Merry Bells Ring*, edited by Doreen Rao in the *Choral Music Experience* series (1988), holds the following explanation:

For the young singer to experience the expressive qualities of each new piece, the music must first be sung. The first singing may be a "guided singing" during which time the teacher and the student explore together the more interesting and characteristic qualities of each new piece. The students should then be encouraged to sing and then describe the unique musical qualities they have discovered, identifying the melodic, rhythmic and harmonic characteristics of the piece and its form. After identifying the musical characteristics of the song and practicing them vocally, the young singers should again perform the music *uninterrupted*. This teaching sequence provides a whole-part whole format: [A] *produce* the music, [B] *practice* and describe the music, [A] *perform* the music. Through active participation and musical understanding, the young singer can respond musically and perform artistically. (Preface)

IV. SIGHT SINGING: Professional Children's Choirs—Interviews

As stated in Section I, the purpose of this paper is to explore suitable approaches to sight singing for children's choirs. Section III examined a number of sight-reading approaches commonly used today that can feasibly be used in a choral context. Section IV will present practical information pertaining to sight reading approaches and expectations for children's choirs of professional standard, based on interviews of three leading choral conductors in Canada: John Barron, co-director of the Amabile Youth Singers, Bruce Pullan, conductor of the Vancouver Bach Children's Choir, and Elaine Quilichini, conductor of the Calgary Girls' Choir.

Method of Data Collection

These three Canadian conductors were chosen to participate in this study on the basis of their outstanding achievements in the field of choral music education. Each conductor is renowned for having achieved excellence in choral performance and each enjoys a distinguished reputation as a master teacher. These conductors also represent different regions of Canada: John Barron is based in London, Ontario, Bruce Pullan lives in Vancouver, British Columbia, and Elaine Quilichini resides in Calgary, Alberta. Each conductor graciously agreed to the use of his or her name throughout the paper, which ultimately provides merit and validity. John, Bruce and Elaine were officially notified and given a waiver of anonymity form. (See Appendix B)

The conductors were given the following list of questions:

Thesis Interview Questions

Part I

Educational Background/Professional Work

1. Please write *in point form* a short summary of your music education.
2. What is your present professional status?
3. As a young musician, were you given any *formalized* sight reading/ear training instruction?
☐ Yes ☐ No
4. What percentage of this training was provided through your school system?

| | | | | |
|------|-----|-----|-----|----|
| 100% | 75% | 50% | 25% | 0% |
|------|-----|-----|-----|----|
5. What percentage of this training was provided through private instruction?

| | | | | |
|------|-----|-----|-----|----|
| 100% | 75% | 50% | 25% | 0% |
|------|-----|-----|-----|----|
6. What percentage of this training was received at university/college?

| | | | | |
|------|-----|-----|-----|----|
| 100% | 75% | 50% | 25% | 0% |
|------|-----|-----|-----|----|
7. What percentage of this training was received through a choral program outside of school, private instruction or university/college?

| | | | | |
|------|-----|-----|-----|----|
| 100% | 75% | 50% | 25% | 0% |
|------|-----|-----|-----|----|
8. If the answer to **Question 3** is **Yes**, please give a *brief* description of the type of training you received.
9. Do you remember the use of any specific textbook used for your sight reading/ear training?
☐ Yes ☐ No
10. What was the name of the textbook/who was the author? _____

Part II

Choral Program Information

1. How many rehearsals does your choir(s) have each week? _____
2. What is the age range of your choir(s)? _____
3. Do you consider your choir(s) to be primarily a performing group, or an instructional group? _____

4. What type of repertoire do you choose for your choir(s)? _____

5. How often does your choir(s) perform? _____

6. Does your choir always perform from memory? ☐ Yes ☐ No
7. Describe in point form your usual audition procedure.
8. In an audition situation, what is your method of testing sight reading/ear training ability?
9. Please describe what the minimum sight reading level you require for a chorister to be accepted into your choral program.
10. How much time would you estimate would be set aside for sight reading/ear training in your rehearsal process?
11. What method(s) do you use to teach sight reading/ear training skills to your choir?
12. Do you use a text of some sort, and if so, which text do you use? _____

13. If you have any additional information you would like to share regarding your choral program, please attach it to this questionnaire, or use the space below.

Part III

Introducing a Piece

Along with the questionnaire, you will find a copy of the second movement of Benjamin Britten's *Missa Brevis* in D. If you were given ***twenty minutes*** in a rehearsal, please indicate in ***point form*** how you would ***introduce*** this movement to your choir.

Analysis of the data centered on three distinct categories: (1) choral education of the conductor, (2) sight reading requirements and approaches used for the children's choir program and (3) practical application of a sight reading approach through the

introduction of music literature. Upon analysis of the data, the key informants were sent copies to ensure that the data collected and reported was accurate.

Interview #1—John Barron

I met John Barron in 1993 at the World Symposium on Choral Music in Vancouver, British Columbia. John is the co-director of the Amabile Youth Singers and holds an ARCT in piano from the Royal Conservatory of Music, a Bachelor of Music and a Masters of Music from the University of Toronto. He was the Music Consultant with the Middlesex County Board of Education in Southwestern Ontario for 24 years. In the most recent CD recording featuring the Amabile Youth Singers (1997), John's list of accomplishments continues:

In 1976, [John] spent a year in Kecskemét, Hungary studying the Kodály concept of music education. When he returned to Canada, he devoted considerable energy to adapting the Kodály principles for use in Canadian schools. He has written eight music programme planning guides for students from Kindergarten to Grade Eight within the Kodály philosophy. In 1983, he was awarded an honorary Diploma and Centennial Commemorative Medal of Zoltán Kodály for his outstanding contribution to the knowledge of the composer's work.

In the field of choral music, Mr. Barron was recently presented with an Ontario Choral Federation Silver Anniversary Award for distinguished service to choral music in Ontario. His early choral experiences included singing under the direction of Dr. Healey Willan and Dr. Elmer Iseler. In 1975-76, he conducted the Ontario Youth Choir, leading it to win two major choral competitions: the CBC Biennial Choral Competition, and the Rose Bowl in the BBC international choral competition "Let the Peoples Sing." Mr. Barron is a clinician and adjudicator of wide experience in North America. His publications include the three-part award-winning series of Canadian folk-song arrangements, *Reflections of Canada*, and a French version, *Reflets du Canada*, which he edited. He is the author of a delightful music textbook aimed at helping very young children develop choral skills, entitled *Ride with me: A Journey from Unison to Part-Singing*. (p.3)

I have had the pleasure of sharing musical ideas with John and was fortunate in the autumn of 1994 to observe him in action at the Alberta Music Conference in Edmonton, Alberta. John was a clinician at this conference and my children's choir had the wonderful opportunity to be his workshop choir. Through this experience it was evident that John is a superb musician, a fine conductor and a teacher with great insight and creativity.

When asked to comment on his own sight reading education, John stated that he received very little formalized sight reading/ear training instruction, and what formalized training he did acquire was partly through private instruction and partly through his university training. Ear training was primarily provided in preparation for piano examinations from the Royal Conservatory of Music in Toronto.

An Introduction to Amabile

Founded in 1985, the Amabile Youth Singers is an auditioned choir comprised of approximately 50 young women between the ages of 12 and 23 years. This choir is part of the larger Amabile organization which consists of the Amabile Chamber Choir (40 male and female singers), the Junior Amabile Youth Singers (55 young women between the ages of 10 to 15 years) and the Amabile Boys' Choirs (approximately 60 boys and young men ranging in age from 9 to 23 years). As stated in the liner notes of their 1997 recording, *Amabile! Sings the Music of Stephen Hatfield* (1997), the mandate of the Amabile Youth Singers is to 'give its members musical experiences of the highest possible calibre and to act as a training organization to develop musical talents. Its repertoire covers all musical styles, ranging from Medieval to Broadway.' (p. 2) The

choir has won many top awards, and in 1998, the choir won the Youth Choir category in the CBC biennial choral competition for the seventh consecutive time.

The Amabile Singers rehearse once each week. It is considered essentially a performing group and performs approximately 20 times per year. The choir has 5 CD recordings.

Audition procedures are structured with a vocal warm up, performance of a solo song plus melodic and rhythmic ear tests. The ear tests consist of three melody sing backs to be sung after hearing the melody played twice on the piano; singing a duet with the piano by following the piano at a distance of a M3; 7 interval sing-backs to 'la' where the reference notes are played once; repetition of 2 clapped rhythms after hearing them once. (See Appendix C)

John does not require a minimum sight singing level to be accepted into the Amabile Youth Singers. The singers come mainly from 4 or 5 children's choirs and approximately 50-60% of the prospective choristers usually study an instrument or voice privately. The Junior Amabile Youth Singers, the feeder choir for John's choir, spends some time on sight reading using tonic sol-fa. The conductors of the younger choirs have been exposed to Kodály practices, but only minimally.

Rehearsal time is not set aside for the purpose of teaching sight singing and ear training. Any sight singing/ear training is integrated into the rehearsal. When sight singing is taught, tonic sol-fa is used. Time constraints do not permit extensive work here and John feels that the older choristers would find this training boring. When foreign languages are involved in the repertoire, the choristers read the texts according to the

rhythms of the music. John rarely uses rhythm syllables because generally the choristers would not know them well enough.

Interview #2—Bruce Pullan

I was officially introduced to Bruce Pullan in February of 1998 at a choral workshop.

Bruce received a Bachelor of Arts and a Master of Arts while a choral scholar at King's College, Cambridge, England. At New College, Oxford, he was awarded another choral scholarship and received his Diploma of Education. Bruce spent several years in London performing with most of the major choral groups, teaching voice, conducting opera and choral music and directing the famous Tiffin School Choir. According to his biography in *A Simple Song* (1991), he came to Canada and 'established a fine reputation as soloist, clinician and adjudicator. He was appointed Associate Conductor of the Vancouver Bach Choir in 1978 and became Music Director in 1983, extending that title to include the Vancouver Bach Children's Chorus when it was formed in 1984.' (p. 1)

In addition to his continuing appointment with the Vancouver Bach Choir, Bruce presently teaches voice at the Vancouver Community College.

Prior to our official introduction in 1998, I observed Bruce on several occasions—as guest conductor of the Richard Eaton Singers and the Edmonton Symphony Orchestra for performances of Handel's *Messiah*, and at many music conferences where he was asked to speak on voice care and vocal techniques. Bruce is an exemplary teacher and inspires not only those with whom he is working, but those who observe him. He works quickly in a rehearsal situation and his ability to produce immediate results is truly

astonishing. He believes that the choral singer must adopt the mentality of a soloist, and many problems persistent in a choral setting, from intonation to choral tone, can be corrected by the application of principles for healthy singing technique. Bruce's vision is precisely described in *A Simple Song*:

Bruce Pullan has pursued a very specific goal in his work with the Vancouver Bach Children's Chorus. The primary aim has been to emphasize the unison singing of solo songs from the basic repertoire of the vocal studio. Unison is the foundation of all choral singing and although the choir performs a wide variety of choral music from madrigals to close harmony, the core of the program remains the unison song. This is also reflected in the policy that each choir member is encouraged to think of her or himself as a soloist in rehearsals and performances. (p. 1)

Between age 13-17, Bruce received formalized ear training instruction through Ordinary Level and Advanced Level Music public exams. These exams, part of the public school system in the United Kingdom, consist of rigorous ear training requirements, including dictation in four parts and two parts, melodic dictation, chord recognition, etc. Bruce did not receive any formalized sight singing instruction, and one can infer that through his experiences as a choral scholar, reading skill was developed through exposure to a vast quantity of choral literature.

An Introduction to the Vancouver Bach Children's Choir

The Vancouver Bach Children's Choir(s) was formed in 1984. Since that time, the organization has grown to a sequence of groups spanning the ages 7-20. There are three junior training choirs, two children's chorales (ages 10-13), the children's chorus (ages 13-15), a youth choir (SATB, ages 15-20), a senior boys' choir named *Sine Nomine* (TTBB) a senior girls' choir named *Anna Magdalena*, plus the adult choir. Bruce conducts all the choirs with the exception of the junior training choirs. The choirs

rehearse once per week and are in constant demand for performances in the Vancouver area. The senior children's choirs perform in approximately 7 concerts per season. They host many choral events and have traveled nationally and internationally. The Vancouver Bach Children's Choirs have produced 3 CD recordings.

The choir performs a wide variety of repertoire, from classical compositions to opera to musical theatre with an occasional pop encore. Audition procedures for the children's choirs test pitch matching, melodic memory, vocal quality and vocal range. The vocal range exercises also function as ear tests. Auditionees are also required to sing a prepared solo song. Bruce rarely includes sight-reading in the auditions for the younger choirs in the choral organization; however, in the older choirs he tests sight reading quite rigorously, especially for females!

Rehearsal time is not set aside for the purpose of teaching sight singing and ear training. There is absolutely no rote learning and sight singing/ear training is always incorporated through the music being studied. Choristers are always being challenged to read throughout the rehearsal. Scores are always used and the younger groups are encouraged to follow their music with their fingers. Analytical aspects, use of key names, pitch names and rhythmic names are referred to throughout the rehearsals. The choristers always perform with music, which certainly encourages and instills a solid connection with the printed score.

Interview #3—Elaine Quilichini

I became acquainted with Elaine in 1988, when I had the good fortune to observe her rehearsal process for the Junior Girls Choir during the Summer Music Workshop

choral week in Camrose, Alberta. Ten years later, I continue to look to Elaine for inspiration through her exemplary work as a conductor and music educator. She is in demand as a choral clinician, lecturer, adjudicator and guest conductor throughout North America, and has recently been invited to share her knowledge in Australia. In the summer of 1998, she returned to Camrose, and the biography from the workshop program elaborates:

Elaine Quilichini is recognized internationally for her exceptional musicianship and important work with young choral ensembles . . . A notable indication of her stature in the choral community is her series published by Alliance Music Publishing in Houston, Texas. Recently, Elaine Quilichini was the Guest Conductor of the Children's Honour Choir at the annual conference of the Texas Choral Directors Association. She also conducted the Calgary Girls Choir at the 1997 ACDA National Convention in San Diego, and lead the Convention's Choral Reading Session for Treble Choirs.

Elaine holds a Bachelor of Education degree from the University of Saskatchewan, a Master of Music (Kodály) from Holy Names College in Oakland, California, and Associate and Licentiate diplomas in piano performance. Her sight-reading and ear training instruction was provided completely through private instruction in preparation for Royal Conservatory of Music and Trinity examinations. An additional facet was provided through solfège/musicianship training from the Kodály program at Holy Names College. She recollects studying the Kodály *333 Reading Exercises*, *Bicinia* and *Tricinia*, alongside Bertalotti's *Fifty-Six Solfeggio*.

Elaine's choral achievements are attributed to her superior musicianship, lovely voice and extraordinary communication skills and teaching ability.

An Introduction to the Calgary Girls Choir

The Calgary Girls Choir was founded in June 1995. A community-based program, the organization consists of 5 choirs spanning ages 4—23: *Prima* for 4-5 year olds; *Viva* for 6-8 year olds; *Allegra* for 8-12 year olds; *Ragazze* a full chorus for choristers 12-21 years of age, and *Brava*—a performing, touring and recording group selected from the *Ragazze* chorus. Elaine conducts all five choirs. All choirs are considered primarily to be performing groups with the exception of *Prima* which is a Kodály based early childhood group. The younger choirs rehearse once weekly while the older choirs have two rehearsals. On average, the choirs perform three to four times per month. The choir has been the recipient of many awards since its inaugural year, including consistent victories in the prestigious CBC competition for the children's choir category. The Calgary Girls Choir has produced three CD recordings.

The choir performs, from memory, a wide variety of repertoire, including art songs, folk songs, contemporary compositions and Canadian repertoire. Audition procedures for the children's choirs are very simple. Elaine looks for bright children with a relatively good sense of pitch and listening skills. No experience is necessary and a musical background is not required although desirable and preferable. In an audition situation, Elaine does not test sight-reading, but concentrates on ear tests, checking for the ability to hear higher and lower pitches; to sing notes of a triad and to sing back simple rhythmic and melodic patterns. A minimum sight-reading level is not required for a chorister to be accepted into the choral program.

Five to ten minutes of each rehearsal are set aside for sight-reading and ear training instruction as a means of preparing choristers for success with the printed score.

This instruction is generally integrated throughout the rehearsal. Elaine does not use one specific text for her reading instruction, however she often uses Seiber's 8, *36 Measure Vocalises*. To teach sight-reading and ear-training skills, Elaine uses tonic sol-fa. In rehearsal, she turns to the use of sol-fa *immediately* if the choir is having difficulty with intonation.

Approaches to Reading a New Piece

To provide more insight into sight reading approaches, the key informants were asked to give a brief description of their teaching process in the introduction of a new piece of music. Through this, it is possible to see the practical application of the music literature approach to sight-reading instruction, an approach which appears to be commonly used by all three conductors.

The "Gloria" from Benjamin Britten's *Missa Brevis in D* was chosen for its simplicity of form as well as its interesting melodic, rhythmic and harmonic elements. These exciting musical ideas provide a variety of possibilities for an introductory lesson. The informants were asked to describe their individual approaches if they were given twenty minutes to introduce the movement.

"Gloria" from Benjamin Britten's *Missa Brevis in D*: Background

Benjamin Britten's *Missa Brevis in D* was composed in 1959 and dedicated to the boys' choir of Westminster Cathedral in honour of their choirmaster, George Malcolm, who was soon to retire. George Malcolm was responsible for bringing the Westminster choir to an extremely high standard, and he was recognized for his conception and development of a bright choral tone.

As described by Evans (1980) the 'incisive treatment of boys' tone' (3:p. 298) is inherent in the *Missa Brevis*. Britten left a legacy of superior choral literature for amateur

musicians and children that is challenging but not condescending. ‘His remarkable ability in such music is to treat fundamentally simple yet freshly imagined ideas with an ingenuity that prevents their descent to a banal or cloying level’. (3:p. 300) *The Missa Brevis* is a fine example of this dignified simplicity.




Designed for liturgical use, the *Missa Brevis* consists of four short movements—“Kyrie,” “Gloria,” “Sanctus” and “Agnus Dei.” Each movement portrays a dramatic setting of the Latin text, with the three voices homophonically and polyphonically contributing to this symbolic treatment. The four movements are closely related through key relationships, the most significant relationship occurring between D+ and F#+. Pentatony, twelve-tone technique, modality and polytonality are skillfully employed displaying Britten’s compositional wizardry.

The “Gloria” is a cheerful, brilliant, ternary movement based on a pentatonic ostinato in 7/8 derived from the intonation of the celebrant. The ostinato is maintained by the organ accompaniment. The successful use of the hybrid meter for the setting of the text generates forward momentum and excitement. Solo passages alternating with ‘tutti’ responses at ‘miserere nobis’ and ‘suscipe deprecationem nostram’ (mm. 45-71) adroitly paint the text. At m. 73, Britten recaps previous material and brings us to the Coda with the use of a 5-fold, 5/8, pianissimo ‘Amen’.




Approach #1—John Barron

Depending on where this piece falls in the rehearsal, how hard the choir has been working, etc. I might talk about the incipit and show its relationship to the music. More likely I’d save that for a later rehearsal. I’d want to talk about “Bulgarian” rhythms also, later.







1. After noting the time signature, I’d look at the last line of the piece and show how 5/8 can be divided in two ways $\square\square\square$ & $\square\square\square$ and the same with the 7/8 permutations.

2. We'd practice these combinations by alternately using wrist and fingers of one hand in a rocking motion, i.e.  then  then 

w f-w f f w f f-w f, w f f-w f-w f,



  
w f-w f f-w f and finally w f-w f-w f f.

3. By looking at the last line of the piece it's easy to spot the threes and the twos. We'd do it first by having everyone look at the organ part ("Why are there 3 lines in the organ part instead of two?") and ignoring the tie. Then we'd look at the choral parts (last line) and tap them.




4. Going back one line, I'd have the choristers write brackets eg.  over where the ,  & 's go, i.e. "cum sancto", "tu"() and "Dei" () and then tap the rhythms.

5. We'd say the text rhythmically and tap the rhythm at the same time.

6. We'd sing the last two lines—slowly, depending on how they're doing.

7. I'd backtrack to m. 73 and again put  brackets over where the 's go.

8. We'd say the text rhythmically and then repeat with the correct expression. At the bar rests I (or we) would say the rhythm of the organ part.

> >
  
ti ti ti ti ti ti ti

9. We'd then sing to the end of the piece from m. 73.







10. I'd go back to m. 62 and mark brackets, tap, say text rhythmically and sing own parts. I'd go to m.62 specifically so the choir could experience the climax of the piece.

11. I'd repeat from m. 62 to the end with the accompaniment added but doing it at a slowish tempo.

12. If time permits I'd go to p.1 and compare m. 12-19 with m. 73-80 and sing them.

13. And again, if time permitted we would read over the whole piece slowly so they could enjoy the whole thing and feel a sense of accomplishment!

Approach #2—Bruce Pullan

1. Explain the Latin Text (from the Mass) with a quick translation.
2. Tell the story of Britten's fascination with the Westminster Cathedral Chorister sound under George Malcolm. Refer to the acoustic and the brilliance the piece needs to do justice to it.
3. Mention the organ accompaniment.
4. Get them to say the rhythm to 'da da da' clapping the    rhythm and the   , explaining what 7/8 means.
5. Read it through to Bar 42 on 'la la.'

6. Read the 5/8 at the end 'Amen' with words; comment on the difference with 7/8.
7. Do the 'Jesu Christe's' and the 'Cum sancto'.
8. Read through again without the middle section.
- 9.

Approach #3—Elaine Quilichini

1. Melodic patterns would be taken from the score and incorporated into the warm up in preparation for the rehearsal.
2. I would begin rhythmically at [the] blackboard with three beats and various groupings possible: i.e. $\square\square\square\square$, $\square\square\square\square$, $\square\square\square\square$, etc.

I would draw these from the score itself and mark it. I would have them conduct various patterns, and walk the beat while counting and or clapping eighths. Then I would put specific text from the Gloria to these patterns and have them work on them until they were comfortable.

3. Make note of 5/8 metre and its' possible groupings.
4. With score—I would have them identify groups of 3's and 2's and mark the beats, i.e. $\left| \quad \right| \quad \left| \quad \right|$ right on the score.
5. I would then go to solfège—identifying Key of D+ and working at [the] blackboard on staff with the tone set so the main melodic patterns were put in their "ears". All parts, i.e. soprano, alto—would work together on all parts—once they've done the melody in this way, I would go to the score and identify melodic patterns they recognize and work through all parts with the entire choir before combining.
6. Perform as much as possible before leaving the movement.

Table 1

Interview Summary

| | #1. John Barron | #2. Bruce Pullan | #3. Elaine Quilichini |
|---|--|--|--|
| Part I Educational Background | Royal Conservatory/Bachelor & Masters-University of Toronto/Study in Hungary | O & A Levels/Choral Scholar-Cambridge/Oxford | Bachelor of Education/Holy Names Masters/Associate and Licentiate in Piano Performance |
| Sight-reading/Ear Training Instruction | 50%-Private 50%-University/College | 100%-School System | 100% Private 75% University/College |

| | | | |
|--|---|---|--|
| Part II Choral Program Information | | | |
| 1. # of rehearsals per week | One | One | One for younger choirs Two for older choirs |
| 2. Age range | 12-24 Years | 7-20 Years | 4-23 Years |
| 3. Performing or Instructional? | Performing | Performing (Younger choirs instructional) | Performing (Youngest choir is instructional) |
| 4. Type of repertoire? | All types (Medieval—20 th century [Contemporary, Pop, Broadway, Gospel, Jazz]) | All types (Classical, Opera, Musical Theatre, Pop) | All Types (Art Songs, Folk Songs, Contemporary, Canadian repertoire) |
| 5. Frequency of performances | 20 X per year | 7 concerts per year | 3-4 X per month |
| 6. Performs from memory? | Occasionally | No—Always performs with music | Yes |
| 7/8. Audition Procedure | Warm up (range) Solo Song Ear tests—Melody and Rhythm No sight-reading required. | Pitch matching Melody memory Vocal quality Vocal range Solo Prepared Song No sight-reading required. | Ear tests—Melody, Rhythm, Harmonic Hearing Melodic and Rhythmic memory No sight-reading required. Experience or |

| | | | |
|--|---|---|--|
| | | | musical background is not necessary. |
| 9. Minimum sight-reading level for acceptance | No minimum level is expected. Students generally have reading experience through private lessons. | A high level is expected in the older choirs. | No minimum level is expected. |
| 10. Sight-reading/Ear training during rehearsals? | Nothing set aside solely for this purpose—integration in the rehearsal. | Nothing set aside solely for this purpose—integration in the rehearsal. Absolutely no rote-learning. | 5-10 minutes per rehearsal usually in the warm up and integrated throughout the rehearsal drawn from the literature. |
| 11. Method for teaching sight reading/ear training | Tonic sol-fa is sometimes used to read diatonic melodies. Rhythm syllables are not used—text is substituted for the syllables. | Constant reading, analysis, use of key names, pitch names, rhythm names. | Tonic sol-fa is used. |
| 12. Text? | No | No | No/Seiber sometimes |

| | | | |
|---|---|--|---|
| Part III Introducing a Piece | | | |
| | Begins with Coda (mm.87-92) Discusses rhythmic groupings in 5/8. Uses kinesthetic conducting approach. Taps the rhythms of the choral parts. Marks groups of 2's & 3's in the score. Says the text of the Coda rhythmically. Sings the lines of the Coda. | Begins by discussing the Latin text. Examines the organ accompaniment. Discusses/claps possible rhythmic groupings in 7/8. Reads mm. 1-42 on 'la la.' | Begins with warm up that prepares melodic motifs. Begins working rhythmically with various groupings possible in 7/8—conducting patterns, walking and or clapping the beat while counting eighth notes. Identifies groups of 3's & 2's and marks them in the score. |
| | Moves back from Coda to m. 73 Marks 2's & 3's. | Moves to the Coda (mm. 87-92). Reads the 5/8 with | Identifies Key of D+ and works with the tone set with the |

| | | | |
|--|---|--|--|
| | Discusses 7/8 in the organ part. Says the text rhythmically with correct expression. Sings to the end from 73. | text. Discusses difference between 7/8 and 5/8. | main melodic patterns. Each voice part learns the other voice parts— Reference is then made to the score and melodic patterns are identified that they would recognize. |
| | Moves back to m. 62. Marks 2's & 3's. Taps/says text rhythmically, and sings own parts. Experiences the climax of the piece. | Moves back to m. 72. The 'Jesu Christe' and 'Cum sancto' material would be familiar as it is a recap from mm.11-24. | This method would be applied through all parts of the piece and would best be spread over 2 or 3 rehearsals. |
| | Moves back to beginning and compares mm.12-19 with the recap at mm. 73-80. | | |
| | Reads through slowly from beginning to end. | Reads through again without the middle section (mm.43-71) | Performs as much as possible before leaving the piece. |

Discussion

While the objective of this paper is not to compare and contrast individual interviews, it is at the same time necessary to comment on the noticeable trends, similarities and differences. One can note relationships between 1) music education of the conductor and approach used in teaching sight singing, 2) expectation of sight reading skill upon audition and rehearsal time devoted to this skill, and 3) observe individual choices in the presentation of a new piece. It must be noted that these deductions are reached through the analysis of only three interviews and are not firm conclusions.

1) Music Education Background of Conductor & Sight Singing Approach

Zoltán Kodály makes a keen observation about the training of music teachers in *The Selected Writings* (1974):

As a general rule, only someone who has been taught well can teach well. . . . A new generation is growing up and—in the hands of good and faithful teachers—is approaching music in the right way. . . The history of music shows that in many cases the greater somebody is the greater is his desire to pass his knowledge on to others. (p. 197)

All three conductors possess rich musical backgrounds that have obviously contributed to their status as master teacher-artists. It is not surprising that John and Elaine, both educated primarily through private instruction with additional Kodály emphasis, resort to the use of tonic sol-fa when reading is taught. Bruce, with his background as a choral scholar, seems to take a ‘learn to read by reading’ approach—one that is observed in highly esteemed English choir schools.

2) Expectation of Sight Singing Skill Upon Audition/Rehearsal Time Set Aside

All three conductors do not include sight-reading in their audition procedure, but rather test the ear. They believe that a bright chorister with a fine ear will obviously be able to learn music reading skills with experience. All three conductors do not set a minimum sight reading ability for acceptance into their choirs, although Bruce states that in the older choirs, the women are tested rigorously. John states that approximately one-half to two-thirds of the choir has previous reading experience through private instruction. John and Bruce integrate sight singing while learning

repertoire; Elaine spends a short time sight reading at the beginning of the rehearsal, using passages from the literature to be studied.

It must be noted that each of the three choir programmes have a training choir or choirs made up of very young singers who will eventually move into the older choirs. The existence of these groups is integral to establishing consistency in musicianship training required for the senior groups.

3) Introducing a Piece—Individual Choices

It is fascinating to observe the different methods individual conductors choose to introduce a new piece of music. Teaching a piece of music is similar to putting a puzzle together. Rao (1987) holds that view that in order to teach a composition effectively, one must know what the desired result will be. The individual puzzle pieces should be examined carefully for important details and then put together slowly and methodically, in a logical pedagogical sequence. These puzzle pieces correspond to the individual musical elements of rhythm, melody, harmony, form, timbre, and dynamics. To give a full understanding, explanation of the historical context in which the composition was written is necessary. Interpretive aspects must be incorporated relating to the delivery of text and emotional intention.

The “Gloria” is dominated by the rhythmic concept of hybrid metre. All three conductors chose a variety of activities to establish this concept. While each conductor chose different activities to approach the concept of hybrid metre, their overall pedagogical process was basically the same. They began by breaking the concept into its most basic form. They then challenged the choristers by layering increasingly more difficult rhythmic tasks.

John's pedagogical process would begin by addressing the notated time signatures. The choir would examine patterns found in the 5/8 section of the coda. These beat divisions would then be applied to the previous sections in 7/8. He would continue with kinesthetic experiences, using the wrist and fingers in a rocking motion—first with 5/8 patterns, then 7/8 patterns. The choristers would then be led to identify the rhythmic patterns in the score, marking the groups of 2 and 3. The Latin text would be added and choristers would be asked to read the text in rhythm. With each new section, John would follow the same procedure: identifying rhythmic patterns, marking them, saying the text in rhythm. The choristers would be encouraged to be aware of rhythmic elements not only in the vocal parts, but in the organ accompaniment as well.

Bruce would approach the rhythmic challenges of the “Gloria” by extracting different rhythm patterns found in 7/8. Like John, Bruce would also include visual and kinesthetic approaches by clapping and vocalizing the rhythms. He would also compare 7/8 to 5/8, noting similarities and differences.

Elaine's rhythmic process is similar to that of Bruce and John. Rhythmic elements would be extracted and practiced. They would then be discovered in the score. Movement would also be incorporated and choristers would walk the beat and either clap eighths or conduct various beat patterns. Like John and Bruce, Elaine would compare and contrast 7/8 with 5/8 and groupings of 3's and 2's would be marked in the score.

Melodically speaking, the “Gloria” is based on the f# ‘la’ pentatonic incipit which also acts as an ostinato in the organ accompaniment. John considered the

possibility of discussing this at the first introduction to the piece, but felt this could be presented at a later stage. Aside from this reference, both John and Bruce would concentrate exclusively on the rhythmic challenges of the “Gloria.” Melodic reading would be assisted by the support of the accompaniment. In contrast, Elaine would incorporate melodic motifs as material for warm up activities. Elaine would utilize solfège and work melodic patterns on the staff to establish the melodic foundation. The choristers would be asked to identify these patterns found in the score.

Despite the marked differences in teaching melody, the conductors include aural training and reading skill in their approaches. John and Bruce expect the choristers to acclimatize to the tonal language while reading and Elaine would make the tonal language conscious before reading.

The “Gloria” rests harmonically on f# ‘la’ pentatonic culminating in the coda with D ‘do’ pentatonic. The journey from the incipit to the coda is marked by interesting harmonic turns. The reverent nature of the text ‘laudamus te, benedicimus te, adoramus te’ is reflected in the harmonic changes. Each conductor would approach this harmonic language in a different manner, but what connected their approaches is the manner in which it would be presented. The choristers would never be made conscious of the harmonies that they sing. They would be encouraged to experience the sonorities simply by reading their individual lines. They would thus instinctively grasp the harmonic essence. Elaine would encourage the choristers to learn each other’s parts; Bruce would rehearse the ‘laudamus te’ and ‘Jesu Christe’ sections separately as these are identical from a harmonic perspective and could potentially be difficult passages to sing in tune.

Britten's clear formal sense provides an excellent framework for the pedagogical process. John and Bruce clearly define this by planning to present formal sections to the choir. They chose two different formal perspectives. John would begin rehearsing at the end of the movement while Bruce would begin from the start. John's formal approach would be 'Coda Av-B-A,' while Bruce's approach would be 'A-Coda-Av.' By basing their teaching process on form, the conductors would be able to achieve a logical presentation that would enhance other musical elements. By starting with the coda, John could present the 5/8 metre concept, then expand to the realm of 7/8. He then would move backwards and when finally reaching the initial 'A' section the choristers would be familiar with the material.

Bruce approached the work from the beginning but his approach is very similar to that adopted by John. By presenting the 'A' section, the choristers would quickly develop a sense of the movement. By progressing immediately to the coda, the choristers would be able to contrast the rhythmic material of 5/8 with 7/8. The coda is extremely short and simple, so the choristers would be able to learn it quickly. Bruce would then introduce the 'Av' section which the choristers would also read quickly. By these clear presentations of form, the choristers could quickly feel a sense of accomplishment.

A twenty minute introductory lesson may not be adequate to present any conscious textural or timbral issues. These elements would be experienced simply by combining the three voices and adding accompaniment. Before the choristers read the piece, Bruce would mention the concept of George Malcolm's affinity to brilliant

choral tone. Reference to this at such an early stage in the learning process is crucial to immediately establish the correct vocal production for this desired tone.

Britten is very specific in his dynamic indications in the *Gloria*. For the most part, the dynamics are terraced. The dynamics are in many ways composed into the musical lines. Dynamics were not a consideration for the conductors for the first reading.

The “Gloria” text is challenging for choristers because of the sheer volume of text. Britten’s treatment is unrelenting with great rhythmic drive and energy. This energy effectively portrays the exultant character of the text. In his presentation, Bruce would share not only the historical context in which the *Missa Brevis* was created, but a brief translation of the text as well. John would present the text as well and efficiently combine it with rhythmic practice.

All three conductors would insist on a final reading at the end of the introductory lesson to review what was learned, plus give a sense of artistic achievement to the choir.

In summary, three leading figures in the Canadian choral landscape, John Barron, Bruce Pullan and Elaine Quilichini have shared their musical histories and as well revealed their personal approaches to sight singing education for their choirs. They are master teacher-artists who have chosen to influence the musical lives of children. Their children’s choirs are, without question, of professional standard. Once they have chosen their choristers through audition procedures, they each must face a multitude of challenges. In North America it is expected that there will be a variation in musical

background and ability. Some choristers may have beautiful voices but not vast amounts of musical experience. Others may have much theoretical knowledge and instrumental experience, but they may have little singing experience or they may have developed poor vocal habits. John, Bruce and Elaine consider it their vocation to lead these children to great artistic heights; to develop and instill a love of choral music and discover the maximum potential of each chorister. This is where true pedagogical mastery is of supreme importance.

Through this interview process, it can be seen that John, Bruce and Elaine share much common ground. They are superb musicians and pedagogues. Their choral programmes are structured in a similar fashion and their artistic goals and standards are comparable. Each programme relies on younger training choirs or demands a foundation of musicianship that has been developed through private instruction.

Despite the fact that formalized sight singing is not part of their choir curriculum, reading and aural training are incorporated through the repertoire. Through a careful, analytical approach to repertoire, it can be seen that a multitude of skills and concepts is presented to the choristers. A global choral music education is provided through repertoire, and all facets of musical development are nurtured.

V. CONCLUSION

The long legacy of music literacy training provides an inspiration for choral conductors in their quest to foster excellence in musicianship. The varied sight singing approaches available can be adapted to accommodate individual needs and situations. Section V will examine questions concerning sight singing musicianship that often confront North American choral conductors.

In North America it is generally accepted, if not expected, that amateur choristers do not read music as well as their amateur instrumentalist peers. There are many possible explanations for this situation: 1) inconsistent music education programmes in public or private schools, 2) private instruction that concentrates on ear training skill (i.e. interval identification, chord identification, memory work) but avoids sight singing practice, 3) the fact that our *fin du siècle* North American ‘techno-culture’ is a dominant force, propelling individuals farther away from traditional art forms such as music in song, 4) the expectation of low sight singing standards itself becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy.

Building a pedagogical process while achieving a product is a dilemma that continually confronts choral conductors. Because repertoire must be prepared for performance, time is not “sacrificed” from the choir rehearsal for purposes of musicianship education. As has been noted from the interview analysis of John, Bruce and Elaine, this dilemma can be overcome through integration of musicianship training alongside the presentation of music literature. As defined in Section I, musicianship is much more than the ability to view a score and immediately produce pitches and rhythms. When skillfully led through all the musical elements with consideration given

to *all* facets of musicianship training, an in-depth understanding of the musical score is achieved which allows choristers to reach a high level of artistry.

When this musical understanding is complete, a multitude of subtle adjustments is then unconsciously made that is unique to the ensemble singer. Choristers have the freedom to monitor volume, pitch, tone and tempo of their neighbours while making necessary adjustments to their own singing. They must respond not only to the demands of the musical score, but are also able to interpret the gestures of the conductor. For excellent ensemble work, choir members must become intuitively sensitive to the sounds of the intake of breath and subtle indications by all members within the choir. Superb choral musicianship obviously consists of many things, *but* by possessing the skill of sight-reading, the artistic product can be achieved much more quickly.

In the practice of these three Canadian master conductors, choral musicianship training is not taught in a formalized manner, but is incorporated within rehearsal of the repertoire. From the interviews, it appears that sight-reading is taught by combining different methods resulting in what might be termed the '*learn-to-read-by-reading-repertoire-solfège*' method. If this 'combined approach' is used, can choristers truly sight sing?

I have observed choristers who are excellent readers but who have never had formalized sight singing instruction. They have had fine private instrumental or vocal instruction or have been a part of a respectable choral programme. With this knowledge it is necessary to ask several questions that each warrant further study: 1) Is formalized sight singing instruction necessary for choral singers if they have an adequate background of private instrumental or vocal instruction? 2) How do these choristers learn to sight sing

if they are not actually given formalized instruction? 3) Is the ‘combined approach’ the most efficient method to teach sight singing in a choral context? 4) What kind of learning process is involved with this ‘combined approach?’ These questions go beyond the scope of this paper but certainly merit additional study.

Practical Applications

To conclude, a variety of suggestions will be given to choral conductors interested in incorporating sight singing instruction into their choral programmes. Whether the choir is of professional or amateur standard, the artistic goals and aspirations of all children’s choirs should be the same. Striving for excellence through a series of well-defined objectives is paramount. The Alberta College *Schola Cantorum* Handbook (1997) lists the following objectives for their choral programme based in Edmonton:

- to develop a challenging choral experience,
- to develop correct vocal concepts and production,
- to develop musical literacy,
- to provide exposure to quality choral repertoire from different eras and countries,
- to enhance the individual’s self-image and vocal confidence,
- to enrich the choral experience through participation in choral activities in the community,
- to strive for the highest artistic standard,
- to foster a life-long love and appreciation of the choral art.

(Page 3)

These are worthy objectives for any choral ensemble. It is also important to remember that the training choristers receive on the amateur level may lead them to the professional realm at some point in their lives. The professional choir is an ideal that provides motivation for choristers and conductors alike.

It has been noted time and again that sight singing training is only one aspect of the ‘full [choral] musician.’ It is nevertheless one of the most important facets of music education. Choksy (1981) elaborates:

‘One of the most important tasks facing music educators is that of making students musically independent—giving them the tools with which to discover music for themselves. Some part of every choir period should be spent to this end.’ (p. 108-109)

It is a conductor’s responsibility to ensure that we live up to Choksy’s challenge. The following list of practical suggestions is offered as a point of departure for those who would like to incorporate sight singing education into their regular rehearsal routine.

1. After assessing a choir’s needs, it is necessary to decide on the approach to sight singing (see Section III) that best suits the conductor’s background and teaching style.
2. Research the selected approach, find suitable materials and plan a strategy for implementation for the choir. (See Appendix A)
3. While preparing the season’s repertoire through careful score study and analysis, keep potential passages in mind as material for sight-reading purposes. In the repertoire, which underlying musical concept dominates, therefore providing excellent teaching material? How would the other musical elements be approached? (See pp. 43-46 for applications of this idea through excellent examples provided by John, Bruce and Elaine).
4. Teach music reading starting from the basics, as there will always be choristers that need help “filling in the gaps.” This is most appropriate for those choir members with an instrumental background but not a vast amount

of choral experience—sight singing is completely different from sight reading on an instrument! If there is a large discrepancy between readers and non-readers, try to develop a multilevel approach to sight singing instruction, divide the choir into groups, or ask the non-readers to come 15 minutes before rehearsal for a special reading class.

5. Both rhythm and melody are important. Avoid the pitfall of studying one at the expense of the other.
6. To make reading sessions more interesting, have the choir read in parts.
7. Many conductors choose to incorporate sight singing activities throughout the rehearsal (John, Bruce, and Elaine), however you may wish to establish a routine during your rehearsals that the choristers begin to expect. Elaine uses the first 5-10 minutes of rehearsal for sight-reading which at the same time prepares the repertoire to be rehearsed.
8. Cappers (1985) prefers the use of scores for sight singing as opposed to the use of the black board. This reinforces score-reading and score-marking ability. Others, like Elaine, or Choksy (1988) use the blackboard for specific reading exercises.
9. If some type of solmization system is chosen for reading, it is sometimes helpful at first to say the names of the notes first in rhythm—then sing them.
10. Lucas (1994) strongly recommends *a cappella* sight singing although there are many conductors that prefer the subtle support of an accompanist to facilitate the reading process.

11. Appoint section leaders or choir partners to assist during the rehearsal with non-readers. The section leader would be responsible for teaching an individual or small group a passage that they may have missed by not attending a rehearsal. More experienced choristers could be assigned as partners with members having less experience. The neophytes can be guided through the repertoire with the help of their partners.
12. Be aware of different learning styles. Some choristers cannot be taught sight singing in the same way that the conductor was taught.

Mrs. Curwen (1886) provides sage words of pedagogical advice and inspiration:

1. Teach the easy before the difficult.
2. Teach the thing before the sign.
3. Teach one fact at a time.
4. Leave out all exceptions and anomalies until the general rule is understood.
5. In training the mind, teach the concrete before the abstract.
6. In developing physical skill, teach the elemental before the compound, and do one thing at a time.
7. Proceed from the known to the related unknown.
8. Let each lesson, as far as possible, rise out of that which goes before, and lead up to that which follows.
9. Call in the understanding to help the skill at every step.
10. Let the first impression be the correct one; leave no room for misunderstanding.
11. Never tell a pupil anything that you can help him to discover for himself.
12. Let the pupil, as soon as possible, derive some pleasure from his knowledge. Interest can only be kept up by a sense of growth in independent power.

John Playford (1674) provides us with these inspiring words:

‘To all Lovers of MUSICK . . . Those then who intend the Practice therof, must allow Musick to be the Gift of God, yet (like other his Graces and Benefits) it is not given to the Idle, but they must reach it with the hand of Industry, by putting in practice the Works and Inventions of skilful Artists; for meerly to Speak and Sing are of Nature, and this double use of the Articulate Voice the rudest Swains of all Nations do make; but to Speak well, and Sing well are of Art.’

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APPENDIX A
SELECTED SIGHT SINGING RESOURCES

APPENDIX A

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APPENDIX B

LETTERS REQUESTING WAIVER OF ANONYMITY OF KEY PARTICIPANTS



FACULTY OF ARTS

University of Alberta

Faculty Committee for Ethical Review of
Research Involving Human Subjects

CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL

Granting Agency:

Principal Investigator: Linda Ardelle Ries

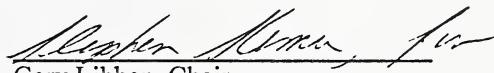
Other Investigators:

Supervisor: Robert de Frece

Title of Research: *Approaches to Sight Singing Musicianship for Children's Choirs*

Approval Date: July 20, 1998

The Faculty of Arts Ethics Review Committee has reviewed your submission and has found it acceptable in accordance with the University of Alberta guidelines for research involving human subjects.


Gary Libben, Chair
Faculty of Arts
Ethics Review Committee

Members: Dr Lesley Cormack, History and Classics
Dr Edward A. Holdaway, Faculty of Education, Education Policy Studies
Dr Gary Libben, Associate Dean (Research)
Dr Julian Martin, History and Classics
Prof Ann Marie Pagliaro, Nursing
Dr Susan Smith, Women's Studies

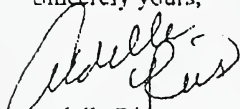
10740-84th Ave.
Edmonton, Alberta
CANADA
T6E 2H9

June 3rd, 1998

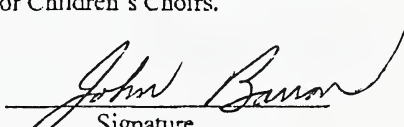
Dear John,

As you are an expert in the field of choral music education, it is important to use your name in the thesis study based on approaches to sight singing education. To waive your right to anonymity I have included a release form for you to sign and return to me.

Sincerely yours,


Ardelle Rics

I, John Barron waive my right to anonymity in the thesis study:
Approaches to Sight Singing Musicianship for Children's Choirs.


Signature
Co-director Annabala Youth Singers
Title
June 15 / 98
Date

10740-84th Ave.
Edmonton, Alberta
CANADA
T6E 2H9

June 3rd, 1998

Dear Bruce,

As you are an expert in the field of choral music education, it is important to use your name in the thesis study based on approaches to sight singing education. To waive your right to anonymity I have included a release form for you to sign and return to me.

Sincerely yours,


Ardelle Ries

I, Bruce Pulla, waive my right to anonymity in the thesis study:
Approaches to Sight Singing Musicianship for Children's Choirs.

Bruce Pulla
Signature

Title

10 June '98
Date

10740-84th Ave.
Edmonton, Alberta
CANADA
T6E 2H9

June 11th, 1998

Dear Elaine,

As you are an expert in the field of choral music education, it is important to use your name in the thesis study based on approaches to sight singing education. To waive your right to anonymity I have included a release form for you to sign and return to me.

Sincerely yours,

Ardelle Ries

I, Elaine Quilichini, waive my right to anonymity in the thesis study:
Approaches to Sight Singing Musicianship for Children's Choirs.

Elaine Quilichini
Signature

Artistic Director. Calgary
Title
Girls Choir

June 25/98
Date

APPENDIX C
INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPTIONS

Thesis Interview Questions—John Barron (Amabile Youth Singers)

Part I

Educational Background/Professional Work

1. Please write *in point form* a short summary of your music education.

*Bachelor of Music-University of Toronto, 1962
Masters of Music-University of Toronto, 1967
ARCT-Piano, Royal Conservatory of Toronto, 1967*

2. What is your present professional status?

Co-director-Amabile Youth Singers

3. As a young musician, were you given any *formalized* sight reading/ear training instruction?

☐ Yes ☒ No

4. What percentage of this training was provided through your school system?

100% 75% 50% 25% 0%☒

5. What percentage of this training was provided through private instruction?

100% 75% 50%☒ 25% 0%

6. What percentage of this training was received at university/college?

100% 75% 50%☒ 25% 0%

7. What percentage of this training was received through a choral program outside of school, private instruction or university/college?

100% 75% 50% 25% 0%☒

8. If the answer to **Question 3** is **Yes**, please give a *brief* description of the type of training you received.

The ear training was only in preparation for piano exams through the Conservatory. Not very formalized.

9. Do you remember the use of any specific textbook used for your sight reading/ear training?

☐ Yes ☒ No

10. What was the name of the textbook/who was the author? N/A

Part II Choral Program Information

1. How many rehearsals does your choir(s) have each week?

One

2. What is the age range of your choir(s)?

12-24 Years

3. Do you consider your choir(s) to be primarily a performing group, or an instructional group?

Performing

4. What type of repertoire do you choose for your choir(s)?

All types (Chant, Medieval, Renaissance, Baroque, Romantic, Contemporary, Folk, Pop, Broadway, Gospel, Jazz)

5. How often does your choir(s) perform?

20 times a year

6. Does your choir always perform from memory? ☐ Yes ☒ No

7. Describe in point form your usual audition procedure.

1. Warm up
2. Solo Song
3. Ear Tests
 - a) melody
 - b) rhythm

8. In an audition situation, what is your method of testing sight reading/ear training ability?

Nothing for sight reading.

a) 3 melody sing backs (after listening twice to it being played on the piano)

i.e. | | | | □ □ | |

d m s=l t d' l f m r=d s,

- b) C+ duet with the piano—follow the piano at a distance of $a + 3$. Repeat the top note.
- c) 7 interval sing-backs (played once)—Singer sings to “la”
- d) Repeat 2 clapped rhythms after hearing them once.

i.e |  | and  |

9. Please describe what the minimum sight reading level you require for a chorister to be accepted into your choral program.

We don't have a minimum level for sight-reading. Our singers come mainly from 4 or 5 children's choirs. They usually study an instrument or voice privately—about 60-70%.

10. How much time would you estimate would be set aside for sight reading/ear training in your rehearsal process?

Nothing is set aside for this purpose alone. Any sight reading/ear training would be integrated into the rehearsal.

11. What method(s) do you use to teach sight reading/ear training skills to your choir?

Tonic sol-fa when sight-reading is taught. Sometimes we read diatonic melodies to sol-fa. Time perimeters don't permit extensive work here. The older ones would find it boring. When foreign languages are involved we read the texts according to the rhythms of the music as well. Only rarely are rhythm syllables used. No one knows them well enough.

12. Do you use a text of some sort, and if so, which text do you use?

No text is used.

13. If you have any additional information you would like to share regarding your choral program, please attach it to this questionnaire, or use the space below.













AYS is a youth choir and, as such, more emphasis is placed on vocal production and performance. The junior AYS spends some time on sight reading using tonic sol-fa. The conductors have been exposed to Kodály practices only minimally.







Part III







Introducing a Piece




Along with the questionnaire, you will find a copy of the second movement of Benjamin Britten's *Missa Brevis* in D. If you were given *twenty minutes* in a rehearsal, please indicate in *point form* how you would *introduce* this movement to your choir

Depending on where this piece falls in the rehearsal, how hard the choir has been working, etc. I might talk about the incipit and show its relationship to the music. More likely I'd save that for a later rehearsal. I'd want to talk about "Bulgarian rhythms also, later.

1. After noting the time signature, I'd look at the last line of the piece and show how 5/8 can be divided in two ways   &   and the same with the 7/8 permutations.
2. We'd practice these combinations by alternately using wrist and fingers of one hand in a rocking motion, i.e.   then   then    
w f-w ff w ff-w f, w ff-w f-w f,

   w f-w ff f-w f and finally    w f-w f-w ff.

3. By looking at the last line of the piece it's easy to spot the threes and the twos. We'd do it first by having everyone look at the organ part ("Why are there 3 lines in the organ part instead of two?") and ignoring the tie. Then we'd look at the choral parts (last line) and tap them.
4. Going back one line, I'd have the choristers write brackets eg.  over where the | ,  & |  's go, i.e. "cum sancto", "tu"(|.) and "Dei" () and then tap the rhythms.
5. We'd say the text rhythmically and tap the rhythm at the same time.
6. We'd sing the last two lines—slowly, depending on how they're doing.
7. I'd backtrack to m. 73 and again put  brackets over where the  's go.
8. We'd say the text rhythmically and then repeat with the correct expression. At the bar rests I (or we) would say the rhythm of the organ part.

  
ti ti ti ti ti ti ti

9. We'd then sing to the end of the piece from m. 73.
10. I'd go back to m. 62 and mark brackets, tap, say text rhythmically and sing own parts. I'd go to m. 62 specifically so the choir could experience the climax of the piece.

11. I'd repeat from m. 62 to the end with the accompaniment added but doing it at a slowish tempo.
12. If time permits I'd go to p.1 and compare m. 12-19 with m. 73-80 and sing them.
13. And again, if time permitted we would read over the whole piece slowly so they could enjoy the whole thing and feel a sense of accomplishment!

Thesis Interview Questions—Bruce Pullan (Vancouver Bach Choir)

Part I

Educational Background/Professional Work

11. Please write *in point form* a short summary of your music education.

- a) Choral scholarship to King's College, Cambridge, 1961-64 (Bachelor of Arts and Masters of Arts)
- b) Lay Clerkship/Choral Scholarship to New College, Oxford—Diploma of Education
- c) Professional singing, high school teaching, opera conducting, choral conducting.

12. What is your present professional status?

Music Director, Vancouver Bach Choirs (9 Children's Choirs, 1 Adult Choir)
Voice teacher, Vancouver Community College

13. As a young musician, were you given any *formalized* sight reading/ear training instruction?

☒ Yes ✓ ☐ No *Ear training—yes, sight reading—no*

14. What percentage of this training was provided through your school system?

100% ✓ 75% 50% 25% 0%

15. What percentage of this training was provided through private instruction?

100% 75% 50% 25% 0% ✓

16. What percentage of this training was received at university/college?

100% 75% 50% 25% 0% ✓

17. What percentage of this training was received through a choral program outside of school, private instruction or university/college?

100% 75% 50% 25% 0% ✓

18. If the answer to **Question 3** is Yes, please give a *brief* description of the type of training you received.

Ordinary Level Music, Advanced Level Music public exams included rigorous ear training. Dictation in 4 parts, 2 prts, melody, chord recognition, etc. (Age 13-17)

19. Do you remember the use of any specific textbook used for your sight reading/ear training?
☐ Yes ☒ No✓

10. What is the name of the textbook/who was the author? N/A

Part II

Choral Program Information

14. How many rehearsals does your choir(s) have each week?

One

15. What is the age range of your choir(s)?

There are 9 choirs from 7-20

16. Do you consider your choir(s) to be primarily a performing group, or an instructional group?

Both the younger groups are mainly instructional.

17. What type of repertoire do you choose for your choir(s)?

Classical, opera, musical theatre and an occasional 'pop' encore.

18. How often does your choir(s) perform?

The senior choirs do about 7 concerts

19. Does your choir always perform from memory? ☐ Yes ☒ No✓

20. Describe in point form your usual audition procedure.

- a) Pitch matching*
- b) Melody memory*
- c) Vocal quality*
- d) Vocal range—including a somewhat difficult arpeggio exercise which also functions as an ear test*
- e) Solo, prepared song*

21. In an audition situation, what is your method of testing sight reading/ear training ability?

See above—senior group entry (quite rare involves sight reading)

22. Please describe what the minimum sight reading level you require for a chorister to be accepted into your choral program.

At higher levels quite rigorous if they are female!!

23. How much time would you estimate would be set aside for sight reading/ear training in your rehearsal process?

None formally—it is always incorporated. There is no rote learning.

24. What method(s) do you use to teach sight reading/ear training skills to your choir?

Constant reading, analysis, use of key names, pitch names, rhythm names.

25. Do you use a text of some sort, and if so, which text do you use?

No.

26. If you have any additional information you would like to share regarding your choral program, please attach it to this questionnaire, or use the space below.

We always perform with music. We always follow the music (with a finger in the younger groups).

Part III

Introducing a Piece

Along with the questionnaire, you will find a copy of the second movement of Benjamin Britten's *Missa Brevis* in D. If you were given **twenty minutes** in a rehearsal, please indicate in **point form** how you would **introduce** this movement to your choir.

1. *Explain the Latin Text (from the Mass) with a quick translation.*
2. *Tell the story of Britten's fascination with the Westminster Cathedral Chorister sound under George Malcolm. Refer to the acoustic and the brilliance the piece needs to do justice to it.*
3. *Mention the organ accompaniment.*
4. *Get them to say the rhythm to 'da da da' clapping the | . | | rhythm and the | | | | , explaining what 7/8 means.*
5. *Read it through to Bar 42 on la la*
6. *Read the 5/8 at the end "Amen" with words; comment on the difference with 7/8.*
7. *Do the 'Jesu Christe's' and the 'Cum sancto'.*
8. *Read through again without the middle section.*

Thesis Interview Questions—Elaine Quilichini (Calgary Girls Choir)

Part I

Educational Background/Professional Work

1. Please write *in point form* a short summary of your music education.

2. What is your present professional status?

Artistic Director—Calgary Girls Choir

3. As a young musician, were you given any *formalized* sight reading/ear training instruction?

☒ Yes ☐ No

4. What percentage of this training was provided through your school system?

100% 75% 50% 25% 0% ☒

5. What percentage of this training was provided through private instruction?

100% ☒ 75% 50% 25% 0%

6. What percentage of this training was received at university/college?

100% 75% ☒ 50% 25% 0%

7. What percentage of this training was received through a choral program outside of school, private instruction or university/college?

100% 75% 50% 25% 0% ☒

8. If the answer to **Question 3** is **Yes**, please give a *brief* description of the type of training you received.

-*Ear Training and Sight Reading preparation for Royal Conservatory of Music and Trinity examinations.*

-*Solfège-Musicianship training in Masters degree in Kodály from Holy Names College.*

9. Do you remember the use of any specific textbook used for your sight reading/ear training?

☐ Yes ☒ No

10. What was the name of the textbook/who was the author?

333; Bicinia, Tricinia-(Kodály)

Ötvenhat Solfeggio-Bertalotti

Part II

Choral Program Information

1. How many rehearsals does your choir(s) have each week?

One for younger choirs

Two for older choirs

2. What is the age range of your choir(s)?

4-23 Years

3. Do you consider your choir(s) to be primarily a performing group, or an instructional group?

Performing—The youngest choir, Prima is instructional.

4. What type of repertoire do you choose for your choir(s)?

Art songs, folk songs, contemporary composers, Canadian repertoire

5. How often does your choir(s) perform?

On average, 3-4 times per month

6. Does your choir always perform from memory? ☐ Yes ☒ No

7. Describe in point form your usual audition procedure.

-Very simple audition—looking for bright children with relatively good pitch and ear.

No experience necessary—no musical background.

8. In an audition situation, what is your method of testing sight reading/ear training ability?

Do not do sight-reading generally.

Ear Training—I check for ability to hear high/lower pitches and sing notes of a triad—also to clap and sing back simple patterns.

9. Please describe what the minimum sight reading level you require for a chorister to be accepted into your choral program.

None

10. How much time would you estimate would be set aside for sight reading/ear training in your rehearsal process?

5-10 minutes on average.

Usually as part of warm-up and then integrated throughout the rehearsal as drawn from the music being rehearsed.

11. What method(s) do you use to teach sight reading/ear training skills to your choir?

Solfège—Movable doh

12. Do you use a text of some sort, and if so, which text do you use?







No text is used, although Seiber's 8, 36 Measure Vocalises are incorporated.

13. If you have any additional information you would like to share regarding your choral program, please attach it to this questionnaire, or use the space below.

Part III

Introducing a Piece

Along with the questionnaire, you will find a copy of the second movement of Benjamin Britten's *Missa Brevis* in D. If you were given **twenty minutes** in a rehearsal, please indicate in **point form** how you would **introduce** this movement to your choir.

1. *Melodic patterns would be taken from the score and incorporated into the warm up in preparation for the rehearsal.*
2. *I would begin rhythmically at [the] blackboard with three beats and various groupings possible: i.e. , , , etc. I would draw these from the score itself and mark it. I would have them conduct various patterns, and walk the beat while counting and or clapping eighths. Then I would put specific text from the Gloria to these patterns and have them work on them until they were comfortable." data-bbox="145 585 920 695"/>*
3. *Make note of 5/8 metre and its' possible groupings.*
4. *With score—I would have them identify groups of 3's and 2's and mark the beats, i.e. .   right on the score.*
5. *I would then go to solfège—identifying Key of D+ and working at [the] blackboard on staff with the tone set so the main melodic patterns were put in their "ears". All parts, i.e. soprano, alto—would work together on all parts—once they've done the melody in this way, I would go to the score and identify melodic patterns they recognize and work through all parts with the entire choir before combining.*
6. *Perform as much as possible before leaving the movement.*

